



STATEMENT REGARDING

**House Bill 6210: AA Establishing Commuter Rail Service Between New Haven,
Hartford and Springfield and to Restructure the Department of Transportation**
**House Bill 5646: AA Requiring the State of Connecticut to Take Necessary Steps to
Establish the New England, New York and New Jersey Interstate
Passenger Rail Commission**
House Bill 6085: AA Improving Commuter Train Schedules
**House Bill 6222: AAC A Study of Rail Transit Time Between New Haven, Bridgeport
and Grand Central Station**

**Transportation Committee
February 24th, 2009**

The MetroHartford Alliance is Hartford's Chamber of Commerce and the region's economic development leader. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, institutions of higher education, and 34 municipalities. The Alliance's mission is to ensure that the Hartford Region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, talent and capital so that it thrives as one of the country's premier places for all people to live, work, play, and raise a family.

Consistently, the investors of the MetroHartford Alliance have expressed strong support for investment in transportation infrastructure and for the statewide strategic plan developed by the Transportation Strategy Board (the "TSB") in 2003. In the past year, our investors have urged the Alliance to advocate ever more strongly for the establishment of one key component of that strategy: meaningful commuter rail service that connects Hartford to New York and Boston.

The bills listed above take important steps in moving the dialogue forward with regard to improved mass transit connections between Hartford and New York and Boston. We emphasize the important of making this experience a one-seat ride, minimizing the number of stops and ensuring that a connection, likely by bus, to Bradley Airport from the rail station in Windsor is part of the discussion. By incorporating transit oriented development into the plan for rail expansion, we also increase opportunities for construction employment, affordable housing alternatives, retail and office

development and incentives for an expanded employment base, particularly young professionals.

Additionally, Connecticut was recently ranked 44th in the nation by a *CNBC* poll (<http://www.cnbc.com/id/25501971/>) with regards to transportation infrastructure. It is widely understood that safe, efficient multi-modal transportation infrastructure is a significant catalyst for economic development and job growth. At this time of extreme fiscal challenges, it is vital that Connecticut stand out among the competition. The legislation before you today helps Connecticut send a pro-growth message to incumbent businesses considering expansion and those looking to relocate.

One major impediment to transportation infrastructure improvements is that, according to the Office of Fiscal Analysis, the state's Special Transportation Fund's projected operating surplus of \$2.8 million for FY '09 is now anticipated to be a \$100.2 million operating deficit. Further exacerbating this concern is the fact that federal stimulus funding for mass transit and rail expansion by itself is not enough to make meaningful improvements in our state. We must explore other funding mechanisms, such as electronic tolls, gas tax revenues and congestion pricing in order to fund critical transportation infrastructure improvements. It is important to note that the Alliance's advocacy for new funding mechanisms is contingent upon the conditions that any new funds that are raised be used solely for strategic transportation initiatives and that such new funding is overseen by an independent authority such as the TSB.

At this time of intense competition for jobs, capital and talent among the states, we must strengthen our aging transportation infrastructure to ensure that it is an incentive for economic and job growth. We ask for your support to move these bills out of committee and help Connecticut stand out as a premier place to do business.

Thank you for your consideration.